



In this issue of the *Standard Update*, read about how the Environmental Data Registries (EDR) compare tool can be used for harmonizing data, EPA/state data standards progress, and recent XML (Extensible Markup Language) activities.

### EDR's Compare Tool

If you've used a computer, electronic equipment, or appliances lately, you may have utilized a Web-based comparison feature to display prices and features in a side-by-side matrix format. Such comparisons make it easier for consumers to reach purchasing decisions.

The EPA Environmental Data Registries also have a feature for comparing metadata, environmental terms, and chemical, biological, and substance identification information. The tool can be used to support data harmonization activities across multiple information systems. The data harmonization process adjusts inconsistencies across information systems by bringing data element attributes pertaining to a subject or business area into agreement.

The [EDR compare tool](#) enables users to display data element metadata (names, definitions, data types, lengths, and permissible values) in a side-by-side matrix. With the compare tool, users can compare these attributes for any data element in the EDR. The results of a comparison may be downloaded in multiple file formats for local use. The compare tool also allows users to compare existing data standard data elements to relevant data elements in their information systems. This activity is helpful in supporting implementation of the final Agency data standards.

The compare tool can be useful for evaluating the definitions of similar terms in the Terminology Reference System (TRS). A search of terms containing the word "facility" in the TRS returns over 70 terms from environmental laws, regulations, glossaries, and documents. The ability to view commonly used terms and definitions side-by-side gives a user insight into how similar terms are defined in different Agency resources.

**Environmental Data Registry**  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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Data Home | Comparison Matrix

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**Data Element Comparison Matrix**

Name	Individual Full Name	Facility Contact Person Name	CONTACT PERSON NAME	FRS_CONTACT_STD_FULL_NAME
<b>Definition</b>	The complete name of a person, including first name, middle name or initial, and surname.	The name of the person who is the point of contact for the facility.	The name of the contact person for the voucher specimen collection.	The person's full name after a set of standardization rules are applied for comparison purposes. The rules include removing blanks, special characters and certain words (e.g., "Mr.", "Ms.")
<b>XML Tag</b>	IndividualFullName			
<b>Type</b>	Alphanumeric (70)	Alphanumeric (50)	Alphanumeric (50)	Alphanumeric (100)
<b>Identifier</b>	1-32400.1	1-5096.1	1-23096.1	1-83538.1
<b>Status</b>	Standard/Final	Incomplete/No Further Action	Application Data Element/No Further Action	Application Data Element/No Further Action
<b>Range</b>				
<b>Example</b>		Mr. John J. Jones, PhD		
<b>Resource Acronym(s)</b>	Contact - ContactPersonIndiv, FacID-Individual, OrgRepFacWaste, BRFacIDStd, PropFacID-Draft, FacIDSHDE, FacIDStd	EFContact_61 FR 195, FI	TSMVSC, STORET	FRSCONTACT, FRS_PHASE II
<b>Values</b>				

An alternate method to view the information above is to view the detail page(s) for each of the data elements in the matrix.  
For data elements with permissible values, the matrix report will display a maximum of 20 permissible values. To access the entire list of permissible values, click the Begin button located at the bottom right of the matrix report.

EPA Program offices are using the compare tool to support data harmonization efforts and enabling a framework for exchanging and integrating data. The harmonization process is designed to improve consistency and comparability in data across information systems.

Data harmonization can improve standardization of data in individual systems and enhance the ability of systems to share data. Data harmonization can also be a basis for complete system integration or for design of

a new, integrated system to replace a number of disparate information systems. Alternatively, harmonized data elements can serve as the basis for designing a core data base that functions as a warehouse to store snapshots of some data in individual program systems in a standardized, central database. Data harmonization can also identify opportunities to reduce duplicate data and improve the quality and consistency of data meaning and format. Additional information on how to [harmonize data](#) is available in the EDR.

## EPA/State Data Standards Progress

EPA/state data standards program progress:

- The Environmental Data Standards Council (EDSC) distributed two draft data standards for public review—the [Tribal Identifier](#) and [Reporting Water Quality Results for Chemical and Microbiological Analytes](#) data standards.
- The EPA approved the [Permitting](#) Data Standard and associated business rules.
- EDSC approved the [Enforcement/Compliance](#) data standards.

- The EDSC convened an Action Team to develop a draft [Contact](#) Data Standard.
- The EDSC selected Tom Lamberson (Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality) as the EDSC co-chair serving with EPA's Mark Luttner.

## Recent XML Activities

EPA's XML Technical Resource Group (TRG) sponsored an XML Boot Camp in Philadelphia in June 2002 with over 30 attendees. The training was designed to communicate the role of standards in developing XML schemas, describe lessons learned from recent efforts to harmonize XML schemas from different program areas, and to provide participants with a common understanding of how to develop XML for data exchange

[XML tags](#) for final data standards are available in the EDR. The EDR has recently added a new search capability that enables a user to query XML tags by name or by standard.

The *Standard Update*, EPA's newsletter about data standards, contains information you can read and reuse. For more information on any newsletter topic, see the Environmental Data Registry (EDR) [www.epa.gov/edr/](http://www.epa.gov/edr/). The EDR is your source for *Standard Update* back issues and a vehicle for reader comments.



For additional information on Agency data standards activities, contact Sara Hisel McCoy, Data Standards Branch Chief, Office of Environmental Information at 202-566-1649, [hisel-mccoy.sara@epa.gov](mailto:hisel-mccoy.sara@epa.gov).